

**Advisory Committee Meeting and Public Hearing on the
Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting
7 p.m. February 9, 2011
Juliani Room, Wellesley Town Hall**

Jack Haley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and immediately convened a public hearing on the Warrant for the 2011 Annual Town Meeting. Those present at the public hearing also included Steve Simons, Catherine Johnson, Maura Murphy Caren Parker, Virginia Ferko, Laura Hockett, Philip Licari, Richard Page, Polly Smith, Derek Redgate, Barbara McMahon, David Murphy, and Jason Whittet.

Mr. Haley announced that the hearing was being cablecast on the Wellesley Channel and invited residents to comment when warrant articles are presented or during Citizen Speak. Mr. Haley then proceeded to present the Articles in the 2011 Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting.

Article 3 Comments.

Susan Ryan of 50 Madison Road said that the Town Wide Financial Plan (TWFP) is being fast tracked without adequate public input, and said that Advisory should not tell the schools how to budget, and urged alternate sources of funding for the schools.

Keri Boyle of 25 South Woodside said that Hardy has many classes with 24-26 students and she wants Wellesley to remain committed to its class size guidelines and said that she favors support for an override for the schools.

Article 8 Comments.

Sarah Pedersen of 116 Glen Road expressed concern about AP classes in the high school in view of school budget cuts, and said that funding priorities should be examined and she would rather see dump fees and elimination of such projects as improvements at Hunnewell Field before cutting the school budget.

Carlos Gimeno of 65 Beverly Road cited a Metro West Mental Health study that he said showed high levels of stress among Wellesley High School students and he said that physical education classes reduce stress and that budget cuts to these classes would be harmful to students.

Patti Chabot 78 Hopkinson Street, who is a union representative for food service employees in the schools, urged that food services not be privatized. She said that the \$75,000 claimed to save by cutting 25 jobs, will mean the loss of jobs, health and retirement benefits to these employees whom she described as dedicated and reliable employees who daily look out for the children in the schools.

Trina Foster of One Fletcher Road asked for a show of hands from other residents attending the meeting who shared her support for level service funding for the schools. Ms. Foster also spoke to Article 3, explaining that she is a Town Meeting Member and is unclear on the action Town Meeting Members will be asked to take on the TWFP and expressed concern about adequate time for boards to buy into the TWFP process.

Susan Ryan of 50 Madison Road said that 10% of classes in the schools are over the class size guidelines and instead of cuts to the school budget, she suggested cuts in other departments, as well as imposing new Town fees and the consideration of tax increases.

Susan Doran of 29 Woodcliff Road spoke to the importance of quality education in Wellesley, and she said that the Town has traditionally passed over-rides for the schools.

Julia DePeyster of 67 Donizetti St. expressed support for the food service employees whom she said are supportive of the children in the schools and she said that the Town should fund the school budget before improving fields.

Michael Grosse of 8 Richland Road said that Wellesley should be looking at investing in our town and our children, and Wellesley is not among towns in Massachusetts that rank high in terms of per pupil expenditures.

Article 16 Comments.

Jim Miller of 50 Pine Street asked for the dollar amount that will be requested under this article for the Fuller Brook Park Preservation Project.

Article 19 Comments.

Carlos Gimeno of 65 Beverly Road asked that Advisory analyze the costs of utilities and maintenance of the proposed DPW building versus the existing building when evaluating the building project.

Jim Miller of 50 Pine St. asks Advisory to consider whether the DPW building is a priority over the budget for the elementary schools.

Article 20 Comments.

Carlos Gimeno of 65 Beverly Road asked the cost of the proposed DPW recycled materials loading structure, and said that monies should be put toward library books rather than toward sorting junk.

Article 21 Comments.

Kelly Friendly of 42 Willow Road asks that before funding a new restroom at the Hunnewell Field, Advisory members come to see the restrooms at the Hardy School, and to see the deteriorating building conditions at Hardy.

Article 22 Comments.

Carlos Gimeno said that dollars should go toward library books rather than to granite curbing on Kingsbury Street.

Article 26 Comments.

Susan Ryan of 50 Madison Road indicated that it was her understanding that after the failed override for the branch libraries, that private funding only would be used for branch library maintenance.

Article 34 Comments.

Amy Brakeman of 9 Ravine Road said that she feels that it is important that citizens understand that the tree protection bylaw is aimed to prevent the clear-cutting of lots and should not affect homeowners who want to cut down a single tree.

Article 40 Comments.

Ms. McMahon said that a citizen called to say that it is almost certain that this motion will not go forward to Town Meeting.

Mr. Haley adjourned the Public Hearing at 7:57 and he reconvened the Advisory Meeting at 8:02.

Citizen Speak. No one present spoke at Citizen Speak.

Announcements. Mr. Haley said that there were two changes in the agenda, with the TWFP moving to the meeting on February 16th and the Planning Board moving to the meeting on February 23rd.

Contributory Retirement System Financial Update. Guest Retirement Board Chairman David Kornwitz presented a financial update of the town's contributory retirement system. He detailed recent cash flow and investment performance as well as long-term funding strategies. Advisory members questioned whether other municipalities were employing similar "smoothing" techniques and Mr. Kornwitz said that Wellesley is employing such strategies as a result of nearly a decade of appropriating "0" dollars. Despite significant asset appreciation since the 2008 market decline, there remains a \$110M underfunded liability. Advisory discussed with Mr. Kornwitz long-term plans for reaching a fully funded position.

Snow Removal Budget. Ms. Ferko moved to approve the expenditure by the Department of Public Works of an additional \$300,000 in excess of the Town's 2011 appropriation for winter maintenance, in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 44, Section 31D. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. After further discussion, the motion passed by a vote of 14-0.

Human Resources Presentation. Guests Human Resources Board Chair Susan Hurwitz and Director Susan Adler gave a presentation on the board's new initiatives and said that they will be proposing at the 2011 Annual Town Meeting a modification of the salary structure to widen the spread from minimum to maximum in a phased manner from the lower to higher job groups. In response to questions from Advisory, they said: the Town does try to benchmark salaries with other municipalities, but because of contract issues, this information is difficult to collect; and the Town is seeing a low turnover rate and they attributed this, in part, to the economy.

Liaison Reports. From the Schools, Ms. McMahon spoke to: new estimates of operating costs for the new high school; incremental costs of opening the new high school; a study that reports poor conditions of older modular classrooms; and a number of school budget items are still unknown. Advisory discussed these School issues and their potential impact on the TWFP, as well as previous recommendations made to the School Committee to promote a more transparent budget. The more than \$100,000 received by the NRC for the unauthorized removal of trees at the Boulder Brook Reservation will go toward ameliorating conditions at the site of the tree removals, as well as toward tree hazard work at the Fuller Brook Park.

Adjournment.

Mr. Licari moved to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Smith seconded the motion. The vote was 14-0 to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 10:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Davis
Administrative Assistant

Documents: Stretch Energy Code, Sustainable Energy Committee Presentation to the Advisory Committee, February 2, 2011; "Example one Illustration " from Jack Haley: Town of Wellesley Contributory Retirement System, Financial update to Advisory Committee, by David Kornwitz, Retirement board Chairman, February 9, 2011; An Introduction to the Human Resources Board and Department, February 2011.